

**Washington, DC** – U.S. Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) joined a unanimous House vote Monday on a resolution commemorating the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act and issued the following statement:

“I am proud to commemorate, along with my House colleagues, the landmark legislation that toughened this nation’s laws against violence committed against women. President Bill Clinton signed the Violence Against Women Act into law in 1994 as part of the Omnibus Crime Bill. By providing resources and coordinating law enforcement efforts, the law strengthened the nation’s response to domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. Since its passage, there has been increased understanding of the needs of victims and greater recognition of the education and training required to effectively handle these cases.

Since 1994, the number of shelters, rape crisis centers and comprehensive service programs has increased and funding has provided resources to women who decide to leave their batterers. The work continues, and the Department of Justice is launching a year-long celebration of this important anniversary.

Although we’ve come far, women in this country still suffer from violence – often at the hands of those close to them. Protecting the women of this country from violence should be one of our highest priorities.”

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